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LETTERS TO M. G.
AND H. G.

Confidential

JOHN RUSKIN

"He lifted his voice in praise of high and noble things through an evil and dark day; and now he sits there, silent and at peace, waiting for the word that will release him and open to him a world where he may gaze on the vision of Perfect Beauty unhindered and unashamed."

H. S. H., 1896.

LETTERS TO M. G. & H. G.

By JOHN RUSKIN

WITH PREFACE BY
THE RIGHT HON. G. WYNDHAM

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK AND LONDON
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PREFACE

I WRITE these few lines at the request of M. G., the lady to whom the letters in Part II. of this little book were addressed. The request was made to me, and accepted simply in my capacity of a country neighbour and friend; of one, that is, who reckons among the highest privileges of his life the courtesy and friendship extended to him, as a neighbour, by the family group at Hawarden. On no other grounds could any words of Ruskin need, or excuse, an introduction from me.

Mr. Gladstone, in common with most of those who deserve to be called great,

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gave fully of his best to all who were brought within his ken in any natural relation of life. The diary in Part I., the letters in Parts II. and III., chronicle a visit paid in 1878 by Ruskin, the rhetorician, teacher, and diviner of the Beautiful, who yet disbelieved in its acceptability by man, to Gladstone, the statesman, theologian, and prophet of moral energy in the practical affairs of a nation's life, who ever believed, not alone in the merits of his cause, but in the certainty of its triumph. They tell of the talk that passed between these two, who seemed opposite in aim and were so in method; approaching life, whether as a problem to be solved or a task to be accomplished, by divergent paths and with sentiments widely sundered; the one, in grim earnestness

and absolute faith; the other, with sun-lit grace playing over all but absolute despair.

I am permitted to quote the brief allusions in Mr. Gladstone's diary to this, and to a second, visit in the same year:—

"*Jan.* 12, 1878.—Mr. Ruskin came; we had much conversation, interesting of course, as it must always be with him.

"*Jan.* 15.—Mr. Ruskin went at 10¾. In some respects an unrivalled guest, and those important respects too.

"*Oct.* 12, 1878.—Mr. Ruskin came; health better, and no diminution of charm.

"*Oct.* 13.—Walk with the Duke (of Argyll), Mr. Ruskin and party.

"*Oct.* 14.—Walk with Mr. Ruskin.

Mr. Ruskin at dinner developed his political opinions. They aim at the restoration of the Judaic system, and exhibit a mixture of virtuous absolutism and Christian socialism. All in his charming and benevolent manner.

"*Oct.* 15.—Good-bye to Mr. Ruskin, and off for London at 9.5 A.M."

In these diaries and letters we catch glimpses, then, of Ruskin as "an unrivalled guest" who suffers no diminution of charm from ill-health or, as he supposed, from the world's rejection of all he wished it to believe. We see the instant birth of mutual esteem between him and his unrivalled host, and watch it ripening into the fruit of friendship, whilst, as that ripens, a thousand blossoms of playfulness and affection are put forth by his admira-

tion and love for the daughter of the house.

In this book we are scarcely to seek for literature or philosophy, politics or anecdote; but we may, if we will—and who would not?—seize the chance of an introduction to "an unrivalled guest," and learn how many flowers of pure fun and radiant love may bloom in the *hortus inclusus* which a great man, no matter how embittered by the general waywardness of the world, can still find time to cultivate for women who are gentle, and for little children. Ruskin's love for "sibyls and children and vestals and so on" was as sunlight upon lilies.

Having entered the family circle at Hawarden, Ruskin is forthwith ready to accept all its members, and to merge

one at least in the most intimate relationship of his own life, which, perforce, from the loneliness of that life, was indeed but a creation of his fancy, reverence, and love. He had constituted himself, one may say, the "brevet" son of his master Carlyle. So to gratify the awestruck devotion of M. G.'s cousin A. L., then in the zenith of a cricketer's renown (but aspiring to much else he has since won), Ruskin, before leaving Hawarden, writes a letter to Carlyle, and presents a copy to the youth and family.

"HAWARDEN CASTLE,
15th Jan. '78.

"DEAREST PAPA,—I am going home to-day, but I think it will be only to bid the servants good New Year, and that I shall be quickly up in Oxford again;

and the more that I want to see you again soon, and not let you say any more "How long?"

"Also, I want to bring with me to your quiet presence chamber a youth who deeply loves you, and for whom the permission to look upon your face will be strength and memory in the future, much helpful to the resolution and the beauty of his life, and give *me* also better will to return to my Oxford duty from the Calypso woods of Coniston.

"And so, believe me, ever your faithful and loving son,

"J. RUSKIN."

A. L. had a little later consulted Ruskin on his choice of a profession, indicating a predilection for the bar,

and received the following letter in reply:—

"MY DEAR A.,—I am most thankful for your letter, and much more earnest to see you than you can possibly be to see me, though I am not certain that—for many a day yet—I may be able to tell you what you ask in a way acceptable to you. That will depend on the time you take in receiving (I do not doubt your receiving ultimately) the truth I have been trying to teach these ten years, that neither the Holy Ghost, nor the Justice of God—nor the life of man—may be sold.

"Ever affectionately yours, J. R."

The man's affection for youth is followed here somewhat abruptly by the

prophet's fulmination of his message to the world. But, in another note, he writes:—

"You know I entirely sympathise with your cricketing, though I don't make a fuss about it."

The fun and feeling in these letters are so delicately fragile that any appreciation of the prophet's "message," also to be found in them here and there, would be not so much out of place as in the way.

The letters are noteworthy, inasmuch as they reveal something more of a great man—great in himself, and greater because he changed the minds of many. But for Ruskin, much of Carlyle's teaching would never have reached people, who, in their turn again, have been allowed to reach yet

others. Even if we leave Art, Nature, and the Philosophy of Science aside, the man who wrote "Unto this Last" remains a great force, which, thank God, is not yet expended.

The letters are generally valuable, because they show that great men are playful and affectionate. In particular, the references to Mr. Gladstone in Letter I., to Browning (p. 42), to the Land-League (p. 71), to the law of land-owning (p. 79)—though unluckily not free from obscurity—are all of public interest. Again, in another category, the planes "twisted grandly by rock-winds" (p. 41), and the profound thought of morning and evening, spring and autumn (p. 42), the "move the shadow from the dial evermore" (p. 50), the olives, grass, and cyclamen

(p. 86), are treasures not to be kept under lock and key. On page 60 the reference to Lady Day is important, and, to make a quick change, I like also to possess the Bishop and Pig-stye (p. 94).

An occasional asperity, as for example the allusion to Browning on p. 42, calls for no steam-roller in so fair a garden, yet, in a censorious world, it may be wise to point out that Ruskin, if he writes there of Browning: "He knows much of music, does not he? but I think he must like it mostly for its discords," writes elsewhere that he had never read Paracelsus and could not, without explanations and citations, appreciate the tribute paid to him by M. G. when she calls him "Aprile." So he had also, perhaps, omitted to read Abt Vogler and the lines—

"And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonised?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be prized?"

Browning, indeed, practised what Ruskin preached, and was, as it seems, unknown to Ruskin, an apostle, as later, too, was R. L. Stevenson, of the Gospel: "There is no need to learn negatively: simply go forward, look forward; never look backward" (p. 5), Ruskin puts it; and again (p. 61): "I'm rather going *down* the hill than up just now, it's so slippery; but I haven't turned—only slipped backwards," with, by characteristic impli-

cation, an almost Porsonian censure on the scheme of things. Browning in a last song, throwing a gauntlet down to death, and, what is braver, to life, calls himself:—

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

This last Ruskin also believed. On page 70 there stands a grand confession of faith: "The death of Carlyle is no sorrow to me. It is, I believe, not an end but a beginning of his real life. Nay, perhaps also of mine. My remorse, every day he lived, for

having not enough loved him in the days gone by, is not greater now, but less, in the hope that he knows what I am feeling about him at this—and all other—moments."

In Ruskin, too, in his life and in these letters, there is a special note of courage. His despair over all that is known of human polities, and all that may be guessed of their future development, throws up in a higher light the gracious courage with which, whilst treading a *via dolorosa*, he placed a posy before every shrine of Beauty and Gentleness and Love.

GEORGE WYNDHAM.

New Year's Day, 1903.

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MARY, DAUGHTER OF THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE . . . . *Facing p.* 92
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I

RUSKIN AT HAWARDEN IN 1878

(Extracts from an Old Journal)

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I

RUSKIN AT HAWARDEN IN 1878

(*Extracts from an Old Journal*)[1]

Jan. 12 (*Sat.*) 1878.—I had the joyous honour of dining at the Castle with Ruskin and Holland of Christ Church. I asked how the Hinksey work progressed. When, after shaking both my hands, as those of one of his "diggers,"

[1] Nothing was further from the thoughts of the writer of this "Journal" than that the rough notes—the very existence of which he had forgotten—would attain to the dignity of print. But he thinks such interest as they possess is best preserved by leaving them "in the rough."

he mournfully admitted its failure, owing to the want of an earnest spirit in the undergrads. They played at it. "It is only one of the many signs of the diabolical condition of Oxford." His talk at dinner was altogether delightful. Nevertheless there was an utter hopelessness; a real, pure despair beneath the sunlight of his smile, and ringing through all he said. Why it does not wholly paralyse him I cannot make out. He pitched into Museums, and Natural Science in general, as tending to fix attention upon all Nature's mistakes and failures—every vile, and ugly, and monstrous, and odious specimen of Nature's doings. He insisted that we were never to look at, to think of, anything unlovely, impure, horrible; we were to remedy evils by bring-

ing up the good against them — to scathe and annihilate them. This was true of *social* reforms also. In reply to Holland, he urged that for practical purposes we knew right and wrong sufficiently; or, rather, we had enough knowledge of what beauty, truth, and goodness were, to work and live in. There was no need to learn negatively; simply go forward, look forward; never look backward. "He that putteth his hand . . . and *looketh back*," &c. Holland spoke of a rabbit, one of whose lower teeth had grown round the skull, and killed it by entering the back of the head! "An entirely fit specimen—being a monstrous and hideous thing—for the Oxford Museum," said Ruskin, hearing that it was there to be seen—its skull, at least. "In Museums we

ought to have specimens—the loveliest, most perfect that are to be found —of Nature's handiwork. Birds in all their feathers, animals in their skins. I don't ever desire to see a Dodo in its skeleton state; I never saw one in its plumage, and why should I wish to see one without?" Again, in reply to Mr. Gladstone, Ruskin said: "For at least twenty years past I have made it a rule to know nothing about doubtful and controverted facts—nothing but what is absolutely true — absolutely certain. I do not care for opinions, views, speculations, whose truth is doubtful. I wish to know only true things; and there are enough of them to take a full lifetime to learn. Why is there not an absolutely truthful newspaper in the world? I hate find-

ing that what I believed yesterday I must disbelieve to-day. Why is not a newspaper started which we may entirely trust, which should wait until news was certain before admitting it; what would delay signify if truth were assured? I wonder no such paper should have been got up—if only as a mere luxury.

"How horrible is the condition of our daily press! Columns full of horrors, murders, suicides, brutalities — conspicuous villainy and abomination. I would have a paper that would tell us of the loveliest and best people in every town or place—of nothing but pure and beautiful things. Nowadays it is the most infamous people who are published to the world, who are forced upon our thoughts. I would have the

gentlest, purest, noblest of mankind, set before the public mind—made famous in the journals. This fame and the world's admiration could not" [this in reply to H. S. H.'s objection and Miss G.'s] "spoil the really good, nice people. Their light ought to shine and be set up on a candlestick. It would indeed go on burning even under a bushel, but goodness ought to be set up, a city set on a hill. No! There need be no fear of spoiling the truly nice people by bringing them into prominence. At present, they are precisely the last people in a place to be heard of."

Mr. Gladstone spoke of round towers in Ireland. Ruskin said that was a controverted subject and therefore he knew nothing of it. Then some words

from Mr. Gladstone about architecture, and some serpentine arrangement of some stones in some building's ground-plan, or some such thing, led to serpents as a topic. Ruskin said that Doctor Buckland once sent a young lady to a ball with a live snake for her bracelet, and he stayed there! "Yes! and well he might in such an honourable place. Any snake might be proud of so delightful a position."

Ruskin said he believed taste was improving in many ways, and young ladies were getting more beautiful every year — and tables were being more beautifully decorated. [These were compliments aimed at his left-hand lady—Miss G.]

Racing at Oxford—utterly ruinous. "Boats"—now the destruction of all

the river's delight and beauties. Riding ought to be encouraged at Oxford. The horse, like other things, ruined [he spoke as an artist, of its beauty ideally] by racing. Mr. Gladstone fully agreed. A great discussion, or talk, followed about horses—in Homer and in general. Increase in size of horses, one marked feature in the breeding results in England. Mr. Gladstone talked of the broad line drawn in Homer between man, as the speaking animal—as articulate—and the lower animals; so the Fates stay the prophetic utterance of ——'s horse in a moment, as soon as ever the needful words are ended. Then a very jolly discussion concerning the Eumenides, the Parcæ, the Fates, or so-called "Furies," and their true idea in the

Greek mind; not merely penal retributers, but representatives of justice. Mr. Wickham inclined against this, and vilified the "Furies."

Ruskin said that he gave his support to the defenders of Thirlmere from outrage and abomination only out of consideration for his friends' wishes. Its margin was already strewed with empty bottles and sandwich papers, and herded over by excursionists, till it was entirely spoiled for rational enjoyment: "Its bottom is literally paved over with broken plates and dishes, so it may as well go altogether, and be drained away."

Then, after some talk with Mr. Gladstone, he expounded some notions of domestic virtues. Mothers ought not to expend their love upon their own

children; but, while making that love the central care, should love all other children too; especially the poor and suffering. They should not spend so much care and money in dressing out their little ones gorgeously and at such cost, but should clothe the naked and feed the hungry children around them. "To be a father to the fatherless is the peculiar glory of a Christian" —not to be exclusive, but all-embracing in every kind of love. Adoption of children is a noble Christian work; choose out good and promising children. If you find really wicked tendencies in a child—give him up, don't hope to reform the bad ones; the chances are that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred you would fail. So don't waste time on the ill-disposed,

but take up good children, and surround them with all holy and ennobling influences. Ruskin described a grievous failure of his own—a great disappointment he had met with in a girl whom he had adopted, or, at least, schooled and guided her in her bringing up. For three years she was on trial in the best of homes, among helpful and pure surroundings, yet it entirely failed.

Then a few words to Alfred Lyttelton in reference to maternal love and its *instinctive* nature.

At this point Ruskin, to our dismay, abruptly rose from his chair (at a quarter to 11 P.M.) and moving bedwards, with the remark, "I always go early to bed," vanished.

Then — *absente magistro* — a quick tangle of remarks followed on his

manifold pleasant ways; his graceful and delightful manner—bright, gentle, delicately courteous; the lyric melody of his voice—more intensely spiritual, more subduedly passionate, more thrilling than any voice I ever heard. He is a swift observer and acute. Not talkative, but ever willing to be interested in things, and to throw gleams of his soul's sunlight over them; original in his dazzling idealism. Forever "thinking on whatsoever things are pure, and lovely, and of good report," &c.; *annihilating*, in the intense white heat of his passionate contempt and hatred, all vile, dark, hateful things. They are not—cannot be. They are lies, negations, blanks, nonentities. "God is—and there *is none else* beside Him."

So I wend my way home by a circuit through the cottage domain, dreaming of nothing but Ruskin and the glory of his soul, and the lovely visions he creates for us, and the ideals he would have us worship.

Jan. 14 [*Monday*].—*The* event was my visit to the Castle to tea about 5 P.M., to listen to the great master of all gracefulness. But, at first, all seemed to fail. Mr. Gladstone talked chiefly on pathetic subjects: drunken clergy in old days, &c. Still, there was much interesting discussion of the Oxford course; the tendencies of the schools; their strain and mental effects. Gladstone gave, as a strong argument, *pro* the value of the sudden strain and effort, the vast concentration of mind, the hasty calling into

play of all the intellectual powers, as a training for political life. Ruskin (with his inimitable genuine modesty) "had never thought of that": "It was quite a new idea," and worthy of much consideration. But he still seemed to think the general effect of the strain bad. Speaking around the same topic, he said: "The man who has failed in any subject has no right whatsoever to say one word respecting the subject in which he has failed. But if I, speaking as one who has entirely failed," &c.; and he then told us how he had failed, "partly through ill-health"; how, out of kind consideration, they gave him a double-fourth; how great a disappointment his failure had been: "not only on my own account I wished to succeed, but also for

my father's sake." I was greatly struck by his simplicity and modesty about this.

At last, in response to the noble attacks of Miss G——, Ruskin came into the anteroom to show us his copies of the three "Saint Ursula" pictures of Carpaccio. Oh! that I could tell, myself, a thousandth part of the delightful things he said or chanted — or looked — in telling us about the Saint. It was, I really believe, the loveliest speech I ever heard: graceful and artlessly exquisite, beyond words. Saint Ursula was a beautiful and pure virgin of Brittany, and her story is a simple one of the heroic martyr-spirit of Christian saintliness. The first picture showed her sleeping upon her bed, calm and still; an angel

entering her chamber to bring her a message from on high; sweet and glorious flowers in her window; low-heeled shoes beside her bed; the colouring was rich and glowing, and the picture was highly finished, unlike the others. The second picture is of Ursula and her two maidens, awaiting martyrdom. Ursula is strong and radiant; of the kneeling maidens, she on the left of her mistress kneels with up-turned face, wrapt in an enthusiasm of prayer; she on the right with downcast eyes, faithful and resigned, but hardly confident. The third picture is of bishops bearing Ursula's body to its rest—grand old bishops (though only two are filled in). It is but a fragmentary representation of the picture—this copy of Ruskin's—but enough to tell

the story of Ursula. Well, he told us of her loveliness and radiant purity and holiness; and how she died ere she should wed the rude English king who wooed her—told it all entrancingly.

And he told us, too, of the modesty and simplicity of Carpaccio, who would be known only as Titian's disciple, and "put his name to his pictures in the mouth of a lizard or some other beastly little animal."

Alfred Lyttelton told me, by-the-bye, that Ruskin had preached him and Miss G. a long sermonic talk—nearly an hour—last night, chiefly on marriage; how the woman should not venture to hope for or think for perfectness in him she would love, but *he* should believe the maiden to be purity and perfection, absolute and unqualified;

perfectly faultless, entirely lovely. "Women are, in general, far nobler, purer, more divinely perfect than men, because they come less in contact with evil!"

Ruskin gave Alfred Lyttelton a commendatory letter to Carlyle, whom he addresses as "Papa"; he ever speaks of him as "my Master." Lord Acton thinks he idealises Carlyle before he worships him; and Holland congratulates the world that he does not reproduce him in some respects—nor again in his style has any close resemblance to Hooker, whom he [Ruskin] says he studied minutely and laboriously, constructing whole sentences on his as types; being told his was the purest English.

Ruskin said that one of the loveliest

graces of holy childhood—that pretty leaning of a youngling against your knee, and bending over gracefully as a lily, with inimitably winsome love—is a thing rarely caught by artists. It is so fine and exquisite a movement as to be generally passed over. He only knew one artist who had truly found it — Vandyke, it was. Little May T—— is with me in spirit as I think of this; in her it is the sweetest, most heart-melting gesture imaginable.

On Saturday, 12th October, Ruskin came with the evening, and when I first saw him was stuck fast with Mr. Gladstone in a political talk in a doorway—an anchorage which was long enough fairly to exasperate one. After

some minutes, however, I met him, and his eyes of true sunshine, seeming incredibly to recognise one. Only dull words, rather, at first. "How was he in health?" "Surprised at his own recovery so far," he said, "but still not up to any real work. He had resigned, or rather sent in his resignation of, the Professorship at Oxford; and henceforward would write his sermons—'what he wanted to say,' and not lecture." "Could he not write lectures, and let T. *read* them?" "That he would like best of all; but he must wait to see what the Oxford authorities would say in reply to his proffered resignation."

Then —— brings the Fishery Game, and the Duke of Argyll and W. E. G. and Ruskin and Mrs. W. H. G. and

others all played and laughed a good deal. Ruskin approved the idea of the game, but wanted lovely little fishes with silver scales — instead of little ugly lumps of wood—to catch.

Then, somehow, the talk drifted on to matters of social economy, and intensely interesting was the study of three notable and strongly-contrasted characters. The Duke was astonishingly conventional, seeming to think the social condition of England very satisfactory, and little needing reform; laughing *almost* contemptuously at Ruskin's doctrines concerning the Thirlmere scheme and the defilements of factories; considering that the labouring classes had but little to complain of, and that agricultural tenants had no strong case against the landlords. In

fact, he appeared, I thought, to represent vulgar British conservatism—for once, at all events. At polar extreme from which position stood Ruskin — Socialist, Aristocrat, dreaming Idealist, hater of modern "Liberty," of pride of wealth, of bastard "Patriotism"; lover of the poor and the laborious, toiling multitude; condemning Rent as a cruel usury, detesting war and its "standing armies." Midway 'twixt these two stood Mr. Gladstone, with his wondrously-blended poetry and matter-of-fact-ness. Rejecting the Duke's criticisms, and, in spirit, going far with Ruskin; accepting, indeed, I think, almost all his principles, but widely differing as to their practical application. He only spoke at intervals, and always deeply and helpfully.

Ruskin preached his great truths, and the Duke cavilled impatiently.

I liked the talk about war. Ruskin spoke strongly about our national waste in military expenditure, and the insanity of our wars. He deplored the existence of our large standing army and navy, and said our country can never truly prosper so long as her best and noblest sons adopt the soldierly profession for a means of livelihood. Here came an abrupt contradiction from the Duke. "They do not, however; nobody enters the army for a *living*." Then Mr. Gladstone interrupts to back up Ruskin, who forthwith explains, "Indeed *all* do; they enter the army for the sake of the *position*, the uniform, the prestige, &c.; and that is utterly wrong. I would

have every man in England a soldier—able, if need be, to defend his home and his country; but not a standing profession of fighters, which must encourage the evil war-spirit." "Then you would abolish war entirely?" asked the Duke. "Most assuredly, if I could," said Ruskin, "and exchange every sword for a ploughshare." In reference to the supposed English love of war the Duke said, "Well, in my opinion, John Bull is a fighting animal." He "supposed Ruskin did not share this national feeling which delighted in wars." "I dislike fighting immensely" (J. R. answered), "and, in the first place, because I am a coward." He also felt that war — unless a moral necessity—was the most stupendous crime, and that Christianity certainly

made *against* war. The Duke instantly attacked him with vehemence, intrenched behind the authority of Mozley's sermon, and appealed to Mr. G., who merely eulogised the sermon without expressing agreement with it. However, it satisfied the Duke, who thought R. crushed, and wound up by saying, "You seem to want a very different world to that we experience, Mr. Ruskin," &c., &c. "Yea, verily, a new heavens and a new earth, and the former things passed away," which practically was a pretty summing up and laughing conclusion of a helpful talk.

Something like a little amicable duel took place at one time between Ruskin and Mr. G., when Ruskin directly attacked his host as a "leveller." "You

see *you* think one man is as good as another, and all men equally competent to judge aright on political questions; whereas I am a believer in an aristocracy." And straight came the answer from Mr. Gladstone, "Oh dear, no! I am nothing of the sort. I am a firm believer in the aristocratic principle—the rule of the best. I am an out-and-out *inequalitarian*," a confession which Ruskin greeted with intense delight, clapping his hands triumphantly.

W. E. G. went away then, and the Duke and others asked questions. I wanted his opinion of Mozley's great argument, viz., "that by its recognition of *nations* Christianity implicitly sanctions war." Ruskin almost scorned it as a fallacious and "childish argument." Then we reverted to the subject

of lords of the soil and their dependents, and employers and employed, and Ruskin told us of shameful instances in France and Italy—of one, *e.g.*, who spoke of his dependents as "cette canaille." Then we talked of the happiness of simple, pastoral life, still found among the *young* people of France; Ruskin said he was rather restrained from saying what he wanted to by the presence of the great "landed proprietor."

II

RUSKIN'S LETTERS TO M. G

II

RUSKIN'S LETTERS TO M. G.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
18th January, 1878.

DEAR MISS G——,—You are then yet at Hawarden? It has been only my doubt of your stay there that has prevented *my* letter of thanks from dutifully anticipating this lovely one of yours—*after* which, it feels itself very helpless and poor, not so much in actual words, as in ways of showing the pleasant hiding-places of the web of things one doesn't quite like to say; one's flattered little prides being all threaded in among quite real and more

close-set humilities—equally unspeakable—and quick little affections which one is greatly ashamed of for having grown so fast, and which one dares not tell of. But I will courageously say this letter of yours makes me very happy.

For the thanks after the J. R.—they mean *both* the things you have all guessed—but are meant, or were on the sudden when you brought me the book, meant, to distinguish the poem[1] as one which had taught and helped me in the highest ways, from those which one merely reads with admiration or equal sympathy; one falls "upon the great world's altar stairs"

[1] Above the poem "St. John the Baptist" (F. W. H. Myers), Mr. Ruskin wrote, "J. R., with deep thanks."

helplessly *beside* Tennyson. I thank Myers for lifting me up again.

I thank Fors and your sweet sister, very solemnly, for having let me see your father, and understand him in his earnestness. How is it possible for the men who have known him long—to allow the thought of his course of conduct now, or at any other time, having been warped by ambition, to diminish the lustre and the power of his name? I have been grievously deceived concerning him myself, and have *once* written words about him which I trust *you* at least may never see. They shall be effaced henceforward (I have written to cancel the page on which they are). If ever you see them, forgive me, and you will know what it *is* to forgive.

And you will *like* having me with you again, then, in the autumn? I never *can* understand that people can like me at all, if I like *them*. I'll read your letter over and over again, meantime; and am indeed, myself, to your Father and to you all,—Your grateful and loving,

JOHN RUSKIN.

[*From another letter written in Jan.* 1878.]

It was a complete revelation to me, and has taught me a marvellous quantity of most precious things—above all things, the rashness of my own judgment (not as to the right or wrong of things themselves, but as to the

temper in which men say and do them).

ARTHUR SEVERN'S, HERNE HILL, S.E.,
Wednesday, 24th July, 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—Please send me just a little line, and tell me what time dinner is, to-morrow.

Of course, that's only an excuse to get a little note, and be able to tell F—— that I've got one, because I could as easily ask at the door; but you may as well have my London address in case you ever have any orders for me. The doctors say I never obey orders, and, of course, I never do any of theirs. But there are some orders I'm too obedient to, for the peace of my old age!—Ever gratefully and affectionately yours, J. RUSKIN.

NATIONAL GALLERY,
Friday, 28th July, 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—You were a perfect little mother to me last night. I didn't feel safe a moment except when I was close to you. Look here, I've got notice from George Richmond and Acland saying they're both going to try to find me this afternoon. And I should like to see them, and to have that music to hope for all this evening and to-morrow morning; and, besides, I want you to give me a cup of tea this afternoon at about five, and if you can't, you can't, and never mind; but I'll just ask at the door, and it's of no consequence, as Mr. Toots says. You can't *tell* me you can't, *till* I ask at the door; because I don't know where I shall be. And I'll come for my music

at three, to-morrow, instead, and you needn't say I may, because I must and will.—And I'm ever your devoted,

J. RUSKIN.

MALHAM (BY LEEDS),
4th July—no, August, 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—Please thank your Father very dearly for his message, and take dearer thanks still for your own. I will come to Hawarden if I may, towards the close of autumn, for I want the longer days for walks among the hills to get gradual strength, and I shall be better able, I trust, so, for all the happy talk of Hawarden. But papa must mark *branches*, not trees, for me. *I* can't cut anything more than inch thick.

Yes, I wish I had known that about

Mr. B.; yet it was perhaps better as it chanced, for I am in a wonderfully sad marsh and pool of thought myself since my illness, and should perhaps only have done him mischief if the talk had touched that shore.—Ever your grateful and loving, J. RUSKIN.

KENDAL,
19th August, 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—I'm going home to-day, and have just been putting these letters that have been carried in my breast-pocket on the moor, to keep the bleak breezes out, up in their own separate envelopes, written in the corner—F—— and M——. I've taken them as near the sky as I could reach—always; you have been on the top of every moorland at Malham, and fin-

ished with Ingleborough last Sunday after church. Judge how fondly by this time I think of the Hawarden trees! Not but that there are some dark clusters about the older farm-houses very beautiful, and I learned something quite new to me of the majesty of the plane in a group of them which I took, in the distance, for Scotch Firs, and could scarcely believe my eyes as I drew near and saw the great leaves, the branches had been twisted so grandly by the rock-winds.

Are you really going to be at Hawarden all the autumn? and can you let me come, when the leaves begin to fall? I don't think a pretty tree is ever meant to be drawn with all its leaves on, any more than a day when its sun is at noon. One draws the day in its

morning or evening, the tree in its spring or autumn.

But I'm still afraid of myself, whether I shall be able to draw at all. I am not, yet; that is to say, it tires me more than anything, when it's the least difficult. It is but too likely I shall just want you to play to me all day long.

You never told me why you were disappointed that day with Browning, or, did you say, as it seems to me I remember, "*always* disappointed?" He knows much of music, does not he? but I think he must like it mostly for its discords. I haven't had anybody to show off to since you told me whom to talk of, and now I've forgotten his name. It's a great shame to have forgotten anything you told me, but I think it's

better to confess at once, and then, perhaps, you'll send me a little note, and tell me, will you?

With truest and most respectful regards to your father, and grateful remembrances to Mrs. G——, and love to your sister.—Ever your affectionate,

J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
27th August, 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—I've been trying these three days to make up a plan to please myself, and can't. There's always something to be left out, or dropped, or shortened, or passed by on the other side. Do you know, I think we children—you, and F——, and I—had better let the old people arrange it all for us; and then we

shan't quarrel, and we'll say it's all their fault if anything goes wrong, won't we?

I'm so very glad your Father is interested in Deucalion. I never get any credit from anybody for my geology, and it is the best of me by far. And I really think I've got those stuck-up surveyors in a fix, rather! I'm going in at the botanists next, and making diagrams of trees to ask them questions about. I expect him to tell me how to answer them myself.

I never was so lazy as I am just now, in all my life. If only I enjoyed being lazy I should not mind, but I'm only ashamed of myself, and get none of the comfort. Perhaps, after all, you'll have to bring papa here. Sometimes I

think I never can stir out of this house any more. But I'm ever your affectionate, J. R.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
Sunday, 30th September, 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—How dreadfully I've behaved to you; and it's *not all* F——'s fault, but partly her ponies' fault, who bewilder me by always standing on their hind legs, or going eighteen miles an hour; and partly the dogs' fault, who are always getting between *my* legs, or pulling my hair, or licking my face; and partly her place's fault, which is really too pretty and too good for her or anybody else, and drove me half crazy again because I couldn't paint it up and down and both sides everywhere; and partly her

people's fault, who wanted to "show" me things, and wouldn't understand that it was a vain show, and that my heart was disquieted within me;—and partly my own fault. (I meant to have *said*, "of course," but shouldn't have meant it.) And so I didn't answer your letter; and now here's your forgiving—*partly* forgiving, at least—but laconic note, and, of course, I deserve it—them, I mean, both—the forgiveness and the Laconianism.

Well, yes, I *can* come on the 9th, or on the 10th, or on any day you want me, pretty nearly. ("You" is to have an emphasis, mind, but I've underlined too many words already.) But what does the Duke of A—— want to see me for? He used to be so grim, at the Metaphysical, I never vent-

ured within the table's length of him. But look here,—you know—(emphasis on "you" again) that, though I shall mightily like studying wood-craft with papa—papa wouldn't have got me to Hawarden all by himself, and Mr. G——, you know, wouldn't have got me to Dunira all by himself—and I should very much like to meet the Duke, of course, yes—but . . . Please, do you know if M. C.'s coming too?

You see, I can come on the 10th, but, after this time of utter do-nothingness at Dunira, I really want to see a little bit of and about books (they're all standing on their hind legs at present, and the printers rabid). And I meant, really and truly, to have written this morning to say I was at Mr. Gladstone's orders from the 25th,

on; but now I'll do just what you tell me will be exemplary, and what I ought to do, and that is, come whenever you please, not *before* the 10th. But, quite seriously, I cannot *stay* more than two or three days at utmost, for I am indeed not well, and the excitement of conversation breaks me or bends me, banefully always. This was so even before my illness, and you know if Mrs. W—— had not forced me, I never should have ventured to Hawarden, and you must be a dear good little Mother to me, and take care of me every minute all the while I'm there. Love to Papa, though, and very true and respectful regards to Mrs. Gladstone, and I'm ever,—Your obedient and affectionate,

J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
2nd October, 1879.

MY DEAR M——,—I am most thankful for your letter, and will come on Saturday the 12th, God letting me. It shocks me to have written as I did, not knowing of the Duchess' death, but you know I never know *any*thing that happens in these days, unless I am specially told by some one. For my own part, I have so much to do with death, that I am far better in the house of mourning than of feasting, when the mourning is noble, and not selfish.

. . . Yes, I meant Lady Mary; very glad am I she is coming, and more glad still that you still speak of her as "little." I *don't* "know" her a bit. But she came once to take tea in my rooms

at Corpus, and she once gave me a smile as she was driving through the narrow street in Kensington. And yes, I know how ill Mrs. Acland is, and I would I could make her well again—and bring the years back again, and move the shadow from the dial evermore. And I am not inclined for "play," therefore, just now, but am fit for no work, and yet the thoughts come into my head, and if I don't set them down, they torment me—the angry ones chiefly; and to keep them quiet, I *must* try to set down some of the pretty ones, so I'm going to write about[1] Ned's pics. F—— showed me three such lovely ones at Dunira !. pencil.

[1] [Burne Jones.]

But the worst of all is that I must *not* be—what the things and people I like always make me—in the least crazy again, if I can help it. Have you no notion at all how very *bad* for me you are? how very bad for me Lady Mary will be? how very baddest Ned and F—— would be? I don't think I can possibly survive more than — well, anyhow, I'll try to get Ned, for indeed it is quite seriously needful for me to see him and talk to him while I'm writing about his pics; but F—— must not come, for Ned and I should both begin to think about her instead of the pics, and that would never do. Besides, I'm busy on the "Bankruptcy of India," and *might* say some things about Indian merchants! and my own throwing away of the

money my poor dear father made out of Spain, which she mightn't like to hear. I can't write more to-day. Love to your father, and thanks for sewing up Hector.—And I'm ever your loving,

J. R.

October 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—Yes, I think all is best as you have decided; and I will come when you bid, and do as you bid, and for me it is certainly better that I should be at your command and at those children's, for what good they can find in me, than that I should be led into the track of my own special work and thought by my friend's overwhelming strength at present; besides that, much as we love each other, there

are some points of essential difference in feeling between us, which I sometimes hurt Mr. Jones by showing, and myself much more through him. I am very thankful to know that the children will like me to come.

I have never heard of anything so instantly[1] terrible, except in the grief of war; but yet how *infinitely*, in the full sense of the word, better to suffer such grief, than—as so many times it chances in this terrible age—never to have loved enough to be capable of it.—Ever your affectionate and grateful, J. RUSKIN.

[1] [Sudden death of Elizabeth, Duchess of Argyll, when dining in company with Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone at 21 Carlton House Terrace, the house of Lord F. Cavendish.]

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
17th October, 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—I got home quite easily and swiftly, though feeling much woe-begone till I got in sight of my own hills. I liked the pony drive and the ideal breakfast in library mightily. The tea at the Rectory, and cake, also a pleasant memory, nor less your father's and mother's kindness, though I think those bright eyes of yours see that I am often pained in talking to your father by not being able, and sometimes by not permitting myself, to say what I want to say. Really and truly, I never can do so, but very slowly, and in books! So I send you another book,[1] which really says more of what I *want*

[1] ["The Eagle's Nest." Ten Lectures on the Relation of Natural Science to Art.]

to say, than any, if anybody cared to hear. See specially pp. 60 to 65.—Your grateful and affectionate,

J. R.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
12th November, 1878.

MY DEAR M——,—It is very sweet of you not to reproach me with forgetting the poor sick painter.[1] I have not, but all my scholar-work is so severe that I had no heart to send it him. At last I have ordered a somewhat rough Hunt to be sent to *your* care (for I forget his address), which I think it

[1] [A young workingman at Hawarden, dying of consumption, who had been trying to draw according to the teaching he had found in books by Mr. Ruskin, that he had managed to buy.]

will be of extreme service to him to copy.

I am very glad to know where F—— is, and if either of you will tell me anything of each other, it will be much beatific to me. I am in a despondent state at the short days and shorter years, and need whatever comfort is in either of your hands. I was so glad you noticed what I told you at that last breakfast. It is a wonderful story, if ever I may tell you more of it.

My most faithful and respectful regards to your father and mother.—Ever your loving, J. RUSKIN.

If the whole drawing be too fatiguing, the blackberries and plums are the essential part.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
January 1879.

MY DEAR M——,—It is wonderfully good and dear of you to write a word to me, when I've been so long signless, but I've been curiously oppressed by many things, and could not speak. Thank you again and again. I am happy in having given that poor spirit some comfort. Keep the drawing at present, I'm in confusion, and am only too glad to have it in your care. I would have written—somehow, anyhow—only I wanted to read Paracelsus first, but always felt disinclined to begin, but I'm dying to know what it is you call me.[1] I do so like to be called names.

[1] [Paracelsus on Aprile—

"How he stands
With eve's last sunbeam staying on his hair

Poor F——, I hear, is gone to Africa, and she hasn't sent me a line! but I'm sure I don't deserve half of the sweet notes she did send me during the autumn. Only I did ask her once where *you* were, and she never told me.

Kind regards to Mr. O——, though, I think, if he ever asks *me* where you are *I* won't tell *him*.

Love to papa and mamma, and Mrs. W——, if with you.—And I am ever your devoted, J. RUSKIN.

Which turns to it as if they were akin;
And those clear smiling eyes of saddest blue
Nearly set free, so far they rise above
The painful fruitless striving of the brow,
And enforced knowledge of the lips, firm set
In slow despondency's eternal sigh!
Has he too missed life's end, and learned the cause?"

—BROWNING.]

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
1st February, 1879.

MY DEAR M——,—The enclosed pensive little line lay under yours, this morning, on my writing-table. Very thankful I was for both of them, as, indeed, I ought to be. Poor F—— is sadly gentle; but I trust the bright Mediterranean sky will revive her father, and raise her into a coruscant F—— of fair South France. It's very pretty of you to give me those lovely lines:[1] I like them because that child I told you of, who died, who wasn't usually by way of paying me compliments, *did* once say "Those eyes," after looking into them awhile. If they could but see ever so little a way towards her,

[1] [On Aprile (Paracelsus).]

now! To-morrow, Lady-day, it will be thirteen years since she bade me "wait" three, and I'm tired of waiting.

But I'm taking care of myself, yes; perhaps not quite the greatest, but enough to do. I like the frost. I can't skate, and won't run the risk of shaking my shaky wits by a fall; but I was sliding about four miles altogether up and across the lake, yesterday, and came in very hot, and am not stiff, for an old gentleman, this morning. Please imagine me, bowing or kneeling as low as you please, and ever gratefully and affectionately yours, J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
28th July, 1879.

MY DEAR M——,—I find it will be quite impossible for me to come to

Hawarden this autumn. I am very utterly sorry, and should only make you sorry for me if I were to tell you the half of the weaknesses and the worries which compel me to stay at home, and forbid all talking. The chief of all reasons being, however, that, in my present state of illness, nearly every word anybody says, if I care for them, either grieves or astonishes me to a degree which puts me off my sleep, and off my work, and off my meat. I am obliged to work at botany and mineralogy, and to put cotton in my ears; but you know one can't pay visits while one's climbing that hill of the voices, even if some sweet ones mingle in the murmur of them.

I'm rather going *down* the hill than up just now, it's so slippery; but I

haven't turned — only slipped backwards.

Love to your father and mother. I wonder if your father will forgive my sending him a saucy message by his daughter, that I don't think he need have set himself in the Nineteenth Century to prove to the Nineteenth Century that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" were valueless.—Ever your affectionate, J. R.

AMIENS,
23rd October, 1880.

MY VERY DEAR M——,—I only did not answer your first letter because I did not think it was in woman's nature (being in the noble state of a loving daughter) to read any syllable of answer with patience, when once she

knew the letter was mine. I wrote a word or two to F——; and now, if indeed you are dear and patient enough to read, I will tell you why *that* letter was written, and what it means. Of *course* it was not written for publication. *But* it was written under full admission of the probability of being some day compelled to allow its publication; nay, it might be, publish it myself. Do not for an instant admit in your mind the taint of a thought that I would privately write of any man—far less of one whom I honoured and loved—words which I would not let him hear, or see, on due occasion. I love and honour your father; just as I have always told him and you that I did. As a perfectly right-minded private English gentleman; as a man of purest religious

temper, and as one tenderly compassionate, and as one earnestly (desiring to be) just.

But in none of these virtues, God be praised, is he alone in England. In none of these lights, does it seem to me, is he to be vociferously or exclusively applauded, without *dis*honour implied to other English gentlemen, and to other English politicians. Now for the other side, my adversary side (that which, surely, I candidly enough always warned you there was in me, though one does not show it, "up the lawn nor by the wood," at Hawarden). I have always fiercely opposed your Father's politics; I have always Despised (forgive the Gorgonian word) his way of declaring them to the people. I have always despised, also, Lord Bea-

consfield's methods of appealing to Parliament, and to the Queen's ambition, just as I do all Liberal,—so-called appeals to the Mob's — not ambition (for Mobs have not sense enough, or knowledge enough, to be ambitious), but conceit. I could not have explained all this to my Liberal Glaswegian Constituents; I would not, had I been able. They asked me a question they had no business with, and got their answer (written between two coats of colour which I was laying on an oakleaf, and about which I was, that morning, exceedingly solicitous, and had vowed that no letter should be answered at all)—and in my tired state, "le peintre ne s'amuse (mais point du tout!) à être ambassadeur." The answer, nevertheless — was perfectly deliberate, and

meant, *once for all*, to say on the matter the gist of all I had to say.

After the election is over—and however it goes—all this will be explained in another way; and you shall see every word before I print it, though there will, and must, be much that will pain you. But there will be nothing that is even apparently discourteous; and, in the meantime, remember, that if your Father said publicly of me that he cared no more for *me* (meaning Political and Economical me)—than for a broken bottle stuck on the top of a wall—I should say—only—well, I knew that before—but the rest of me he loves, for all that.

I meant this letter to be so legible, and so clear and quiet—and here it is, all in a mess, as usual. . . . Perhaps

you'll like it better so; but mind I've written it straight away the moment I opened a line from my niece saying she had seen Mr. Burne Jones, and that you *might* be written to! And, my dear, believe this, *please*—if you care to believe it—that I never in my life was in such peril of losing my "political independence" as under my little Madonna's power at Hawarden.—And I am, and shall be ever, her loving servant,

JOHN RUSKIN.

[This letter (28th July, 1879) was written in answer to one from M. G., in which she informed him that his name had been taken in vain by the newspapers, and quoting the paragraph in question. (She thought this was the best way of punishing him.)]

AMIENS,
28th October, 1880.

MY DARLING LITTLE MADONNA,—You are really *gratia plena* (don't be shocked, I'm writing about the Saints all day, just now, and don't know when I'm talking quite properly to my pets), but it is unspeakably sweet of your Father and you to forgive me so soon, and I'm inclined to believe anything you'll tell me of him, after that; only, you know, I'm a great believer in goodness, and fancy there are many people who ought to be canonized who never are; so that—be a man ever so good—I'm not idolatrous of him. (If it's a—Madonna, it's another thing you know), but I never for an instant meant any comparison or likeness between D. and your Father—they merely

had to be named as they were questioned of. On the other hand, I know nothing about D. whatsoever, but have a lurking tenderness about him because my own father had a liking for him, and was in great grief about my first political letter—twenty (or thirty?) years ago —which was a fierce attack upon him.

I do trust nothing more will ever cause you to have doubt or pain. I can't get what I have to say said; I'm tired to-day — have found out things very wonderful, and had—with your letter at last—more pleasure than I can bear without breaking down.

Dear love to your father.—Ever your grateful, ST. C.[1]

[1] [St. Chrysostom (St. John the Golden-mouthed), the name given to Mr. Ruskin by his friend Mrs. Cowper Temple.]

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
15th February, 1881.

MY DEAR M——,—I am more than glad to have your letter to-day, for I have been thinking of you quite as often as you of me—to say the least—and wishing, you don't know how much, to see you.

The death of Carlyle is no sorrow to me. It is, I believe, not an end—but a beginning of his real life. Nay, perhaps also of mine. My remorse, every day he lived, for having not enough loved him in the days gone by, is not greater now, but less, in the hope that he knows what I am feeling about him at this—and all other—moments.

I want woefully to see Alfred also. Can neither of you come here? I

want *you* to play to me, and spiritualize me; him to play with me, and if *he* thinks it so! materialize me.

Please give my love to F——. I have been thinking of her too. I owe her two pounds, and shall try to send her *pious* usury. They have been too long in my napkin.

Don't let her do too much—(nor too little), and I want to see how she looks with more colour—beauty truly blest, &c.

Dear love to your father; but tell him he hasn't scattered the Angelic Land-League, — and that that Punch is not a representation of its stick — or shillelagh — power. — Ever your loving,

JOHN RUSKIN.

20th February, 1882.

DEAR M——,—Of course I'll come; and at four, or a little earlier,—unless—a slight feeling of cold upon me to-day should become — tyrannous. I have been so much favoured by Fortune and Fate, since I was here at their mercy, that it will be only like their usual way with me to take this Ash Wednesday from me, and make it truly, what I suppose, in modern, poetical, and scientific diction, I should call Cinereous. You will not doubt my hope to come, but I must not play with any symptoms of breaking down.

I will write you a line, in any case, to-morrow. With grateful love to your father.—Ever your loving,

ST. C.

1882.

DEAREST M——,—The tea and roses will be exactly the nicest and sweetest for me to-day; but mind, you're not to have a levée, and cheat me of my music. . . . Please think, meantime, if you can find a tune that would go to Scott's "The heath this night must be my bed," in "The Lady of the Lake." It is quite curious how sometimes the prettiest words won't go to note-times. I *can't* get any tune to go to those, unless one puts Marie, with accent as in French, for the two short syllables of Scott's Mary.—Ever, my dear, your loving ST. C.

Shrove Tuesday, 1882.

MY DEAR M——,—It is all over with my hopes for to-morrow; a dis-

tinctly threatening cough at once compels me to close my poor little wings and shrink into my nest. I am not afraid of it—on these submissive and resigned terms—but it will not allow itself to be braved; and all my pretty plans are broken, like Alnaschar's,[1] for a week, at least, except that I shall be able to see A—— on Friday.

I cannot but accept, in its full force, your assurance that your father wished to see me; but, surely if there is anything on which he would care to ask me a question, you can write it for him, and I answer, without disturbance of his one day of rest? You will not, nor will he, doubt how eagerly I should have come if I could.—Ever your loving, ST. C.

[1] Arabian Nights.

Ash Wednesday, 1882.

DEAR M——.—(This)—Wednesday week—*D.V.*, shall be kept sacred with you; I've only a little cough and hot hands; conquerable, I doubt not, before then; but insisting on captivity at present. The day is sunny, and my window looks over the Surrey hills; and I'm thinking over a word or two I want to say in a new small edition of "Sesame and Lilies," for girls only, without the mystery of life—just a few words about obeying Fathers as well as ruling Husbands. I'm more and more convinced of the total inability of Men to manage themselves, much less their wives and daughters; but it's pretty of daughters to be obedient, and the book's imperfect without a word or two in favour of the papas. (You can guess

why it hadn't that—at first.)—Ever your loving, ST. C.

MY DEAR M——,—You know your Father doesn't really want to see me; and if he does, he oughtn't, but should rest whenever he can; and I can't put A—— off, and I don't want to, because she's going out of town, and all that *I* want is to finish that morning's minute (but I hope a minute takes a long time to finish), and you can do *that* for me whenever you like—almost. Let me see, I won't be so horrid as to say, I'll stop in town *till* you like. But I do think, when I was so civil about that organ yesterday (or whatever it is) that you *might* play me a little music to my mind.—Ever your loving,

ST. C.

1st March, 1882.

DARLING M——,—Your two notes are (what do you call them in music?) very lovely to me. I want you to put a third to them, then we can have a chord, can't we? I'm really ever so ill, still, and looking such a fright! I *could* tell you what I'm like, but please don't ask me.

Only, please, please very much, my dear little mother, read this enclosed note from one of the most precious girls I've ever known, in mere honesty and simplicity of heart-depth, and tell me what I *ought* to answer? Of course I won't answer *that*, but I should like to know, all the same; and tell me if you've known any quite horrid papas of this sort, and what's to be said about *them* in my new preface to "Sesame."

I've written a very short moral and

anodynic line to her, to-day. The cousin's not the depth of the thing,—but he *is*, I believe, dying fast; perhaps for her *own* peace she's much better out of the way, but she might have been sent to a place where she could enjoy herself. (She's just eighteen.)—Ever your loving (it's all in sympathetic ink, though 'tis faded), lovingest, and grate-fullest, ST. C.

HERNE HILL,
28th (29th) March, 1882.

MY DEAR M——,—I have been darkly ill again. I do not quite yet know *how* ill, or how near the end of illness in this world, but I am to-day able to write (as far as this may be called writing) again; and I fain would pray your pardon for what must seem only

madness still, in asking you to tell your Father how terrified I am at the position he still holds in the House, for separate law for Ireland and England.

For these seven, nay these *ten years*, I have tried to get either Mr. Gladstone or any other conscientious Minister of the Crown to feel that the law of land-possession was for all the world, and eternal as the mountains and the sea.

Those who possess the land must live *on* it, not by taxing it.

Stars and seas and rocks must pass away before *that* Word of God shall pass away, "The Land is *Mine*."

And the position taken by the Parliament just now is so frightful to me, in its absolute defiance of every human prognostic of Revolution, that I *must* write to you in this solemn way about

it, the first note I gravely sit down to write in my own old nursery, with, I trust, yet uncrushed life and brain. —Ever your affectionate,

JOHN RUSKIN.

1882.

DARLING M——,—I don't know what to do, for that music is always in my ears, and I can't do my mineralogy.

Also, I'm rather badly in love with that girl in the cap; you shouldn't have told me of her!

Also, I want to be a bear-killer and bull-tamer; and to have vulture maidens[1] going up trees like squirrels to look at me.

Also,—and this is quite serious (and

[1] M. G. had lent him "The Vulture Maiden" (W. von Hillern).

so's the first sentence, and, indeed, so are the others)—I want you to get me the prettiest possible pair of gauntlet gloves that will fit a little girl of eleven or ten (I can't quite guess), but they're only to be rough gloves for country walks among thistles, only I want them pretty. She didn't win them fairly (more's the pity), but only in a skirmish with burdock heads, which I had no chance in, but you must have them for me to address, when I come on Monday.

Dear love to papa and mamma, and much to H——.—Ever your devoted,

ST. C.

AVALLON,
21st August, 1882.

MY DEAR M——,—I thought you would be at Hawarden by this time,

and venture the vulture maiden there; frightened lest I should lose her among these granite glens, which I can't tread in search of her with the elastic step of my youth. And I'm in frightfully bad humour, because I've got nobody coming to tea, and nobody to go to tea to, and this is only to say I've sent the book faithful, and that I still say it's nonsense; and that I've heard no music yet in France but steam-whistles.—And I'm ever your loving,

ST. C.

But I'll write you again, soon.

CHAMBERY,
21st September, 1882.

MY DEAR M——.—But what did you go to Skye for?—she'll beguile you into thinking it's all right directly.—

Couldn't you have stopped at Hawarden to comfort me a little, first? The puss never told me a word about it; and when I got your letter, on an extremely wet day at Annecy, it was as if a bit of the sky had tumbled after the rain. Mind, *you* must be very good to me yet for a long while, and mustn't go and get married in the next chapter. If I hadn't a vague hope of always finding a vulture maiden on a peak, somewhere accessible, I don't know what would become of me. (The nearest approach to the thing yet was four buzzards on the Dôle—but there was no maiden!) And perhaps there may be some consolation in Sister Dora, when I get back.

I've not got to Italy yet, you see,

and am reduced to the tunnel to-day, after all my fine plans of walking over the Alps. We have not had a fair day for three weeks, except a bitter cold one, when I got up the Dôle, but saw nothing from it except a line of mist where Alps used to be.

Please, if this ever finds you, send me some chat and some pacifying reflections to P. R. Lucca. I've half a mind to go on to Monte Cassino and not come back.—But I'm ever your grateful and loving, ST. C.

LUCCA,
3rd October, 1882.

MY DEAR M——,—Expecting a letter, is she, with my consent and blessing? But doesn't she mean to take both, whether I give them or not? Tell

her I'm thinking about it; and, in the meantime, I'll thank her not to take *you* out in boats not meant to be sailed in; for I don't find that people help me much out of heaven, and you're the only creature I've got left, now, who can at all manage me, or play a note of music for me as I like.

And tell her, also, I'm not thinking *much* about it, neither, for I've got my Ilaria here, and her pug-dog, and am rather happy.

Such a walk as I had, too, the day before yesterday, on the marble hills which look to Pisa and the sea. It is a great grace of the olive, not enough thought on, that it does not hurt the grass underneath; and on the shady grass banks and terraces beneath the

grey and silver of the wild branches, the purple cyclamens are all out, not in showers merely, but *masses*, as thick as violets in spring — vividest pale red-purple, like light of evening.

And it's just chestnut fall time; and where the olives and cyclamens end, the chestnuts begin, ankle-deep in places, like a thick, golden-brown moss, which the sunshine rests upon as if it loved it. Higher up come again the soft grass terraces, without the olives, swept round the hillsides as if all the people of Italy came there to sit and gaze at the sea, and Capraja and Gorgona.

I can walk pretty well, I find, still; and draw pretty well, if I don't write books nor letters to young ladies on

their marriage, nor to bankers on business, nor to authors on literature; but it's difficult to get a quiet time with a good conscience. I'm not going to do anything to-day but enjoy myself, after *this* letter's done, which I've rather enjoyed writing, too. You know its chief business is to thank you for your pretty postscript—but you know —none of you know!

Meantime,—I'm your comforted and loving, ST. C.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
May-day, 1883.

DEAREST M——,—Do you think you've been behaving prettily in not sending me a word all this time? Because if you do, I don't, and I wouldn't have written a word to *you* to-day, only

I've just got a most precious letter from Mr. Fuller Maitland about music, and as it was F——'s doing, taking me to hear the Meister-Singer, I want you to say to F—— that I'll make it up, now, if she likes to.

Dear love to papa.—Ever your long-suffering, ST. C.

84 WOODSTOCK ROAD, OXFORD,
26th November, 1884.

YOU DARLING LITTLE MOTHER,—You really are the most perfect angel that ever St. Cecilia brought up.

I've been so woful for not seeing nor hearing you, you wouldn't believe! Please come and comfort me as soon as ever you can. Your note makes me so happy I can't understand it; but I'll be wherever you

want me to be, next week, and always, if I can.—Ever your loving,

ST. C.

84 WOODSTOCK ROAD, OXFORD,
November 1884.

MY DARLING M——,—Tuesday, Wednesday, most of Thursday, all Friday and all Saturday I'm at your beck, call, whisper, look, or lifted finger.

I've a meeting of St. George's Guild at the schools on Thursday, which fastens me for the afternoon.

I shall love to hear the story,[1] and wish it would take an hour instead of ten minutes; but, of course, if *you* like it, *I* shall. I don't mean that in play, but seriously; you know good writing

[1] ["The Mad Lady," A story in manuscript, written by Laura Tennant.]

and feeling as well as I do, and we are not likely to differ a jot about anything else.—Ever your loving, ST. C.

The picture is quite lovely. He never did anything else like it.[1]

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
16th December, 1884.

MY DEAREST M——,—It is ever so sweet and wise-thoughtful of you to send me this picture, and it comes just when I most needed something to set me up a little, for I have been struggling home through snow and smoke with the heaviest and most depressing cold upon me that one could have, not to be serious, and I feel as if nobody could ever love me, or believe me, or

[1] [A drawing of M. G., by Burne Jones.]

"The heads of Medea and of Danae, which I placed in your schools long ago, are representative of all that you need aim at in chiaroscuro; and lately a third type of his (Burne-Jones) best work, in subdued pencil light and shade, has been placed within your reach in Dr. Acland's drawing-room—the portrait of Miss Gladstone, in which you will see the painter's best powers stimulated to their utmost, and reaching a serene depth of expression unattainable by photography, and nearly certain to be lost in finished painting."
—JOHN RUSKIN *in "The Art of England: II. Burne-Jones and Watts," delivered at Oxford, May* 12, 1883.

MARY, DAUGHTER OF THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE

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MARY, DAUGHTER OF THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE

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listen to me, or get any good of me ever any more.

Please—this is very serious—make me of any good to you that you can, or care to, always.—Ever your affectionate, J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
29th December, 1885.

DARLING M——,—Bless you? Blest if I do; I'll give you absolution, if you come and ask it very meekly, but don't you know how I hate girls marrying curates? You must come directly and play me some lovely tunes—it's the last chance you'll have of doing anything to please me, for I don't like married women; I like sibyls and children and vestals, and so on. Not that I mean to quarrel with you, if you'll come now

and make it up. If you can leave your father at all—sooner or later by a day or two doesn't matter, or a day or two out of what you have left (I had rather you waited till crocus or anemone time, for we're about ugliest just now). As for F——, she was a horrid traitress, but *you* have been very faithful to me through all my wicked sayings about papa (I can tell you there would have been a word or two more if you hadn't been in the way). As for the poverty and cottage and all the rest of that nonsense, do you think you'll get any credit in heaven for being poor when you fall in love first? If you had married a conscientious Bishop, and made *him* live in a pig-stye—*à la bonne heure!*—Ever your loving and too-forgiving, ST. C.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
13th January, 1886.

MY DEAR M——,—I am sending you to-day some drawings by Miss Alexander, which I think you will all like to look at; but I suppose H—— is with you, and I want her to take back to Cambridge, in gift to her college, the two of the Superiora and her girls, and the text of their history. In the course of the spring I shall want the text copied for publication, and will borrow the drawings to photograph.

The light landscape drawing of girls at a fountain is a present to Girton—promised in the songs of Tuscany. This is my own; but the Superiora and her story still belong to Miss Alexander; but as she is my "sorella," I practically give them away.

I couldn't answer your last letter without being disagreeable. I didn't mean, and never have thought, that girls were higher or holier than wives — Heaven forbid. I merely said I liked them better; which, surely, is extremely proper of me.—Ever your loving, J. R.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON,
27th January, 1886.

MY DEAR M——,—Your letter is very pretty—but women are stupid creatures after all! It really hurts a great deal more than you have the least idea —(but you ought to have had an idea, if women weren't stupid) to think that this is the last week of M. G.—and it's horrid to be hurt when one's as old as I am. I shan't think of you a bit. Of course I'll send you "Præterita,"

but I must finish the first vol., and bind it for you. I shall write "M. G." in the first number, to-day. I am sending on your letter as I did the last —to my sorella Francesca—who wrote back, I ought not to quarrel with you —but women are stupid creatures!

J. R.

I've given up being St. C.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
2nd April, 1886.

MY DEAR M——,—I am a little glad of a word from Hawarden again—though I'm frightfully sulky with everybody in the world except my sorella at Florence (and *she's* a horrid evangelical, and thinks St. Paul was a wicked man before he was unhorsed). But everybody here has gone away

to London and left me in my old age. I've nothing to depend on except three ducks and the shepherd's little girl up the hill, who takes care of his lambs and piglets—and I call her Pigwiggina (I will look over the little girl class drawings—if they'd like me to), and I am teaching her to play upon four bells—A B C♯ and E—and writing beautiful tunes for her, composed of those elements.

I thought you'd have forgotten *all* Præteritas, and wasn't troubling myself, but some are coming bound in a few days, and I'll write a "M——" in one of them. The second volume is giving me a lot of trouble, because I have to describe things in it that people never see nowadays—and it's like writing about the moon. Also, when I be-

gin to crow a little, it doesn't read so pretty as the humble pie.

I am thankful your father's getting a little rest.

Has it never occurred to any of you in all your lives, I wonder, that all Parliamentary debate should be in the Tower, or the Round Tower of Windsor, and only the *outcome* of debate printed—when it's irrevocable.

If the Queen would have me for Grand Vizier, I'd save papa such a lot of trouble, and come and chop twigs with him afterwards—when he'd got the tree down.—Ever your, J. R.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
29th October, 1886.

MY DEAREST M——,—How often I think of you, and shall think as long as

this life, whether of dream or reality, is spared to me, I am most thankful to be permitted to tell you, for my own sake; how much more if you can really get some strength or joy from your old friend, not having forgotten, nor tried to forget what you used to be to him. Of course, no one had told me of your illness, or my own would not have prevented my trying to hear of your safety; and, indeed, what you say of these illnesses of mine is in great part true, but they are very grievous to me, and I trust yours will return no more.

I am more passionately and carefully occupied in music than ever yet. Please get well, and be Sainte Cecile again to me. I will not write more to-day, but the moment you tell me

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again you should like me to.—Ever your loving "Aprile."

JOHN RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
26th March, 1887.

DARLING CECILIA,—I am so very thankful for your letter, and for all it tells of yourself and says of me. If a great illness like that is quite conquered, the return to the lovely world is well worth having left it for the painful time; one never knew what beauty was before (unless in happy love which I had about two hours and three-quarters of once in my life). I am really better now than for some years back, able every day for a little work, not fast, but very slow (Second Præt. isn't out yet, I'm just at work on the

eleventh chapter); and able to take more pleasure in things than lately. It's not to go into "Præterita," but you and F—— may know that I've been these last two years quite badly in love with ——, who's a Skye girl, half rook, half terrier, with a wonderful musical gift, and led me a dog's life, and never would play a note rightly if I was in the room, but made the piano clash and growl at me. At last I've been obliged to make them keep her at Herne Hill, and I'm getting some peace, but badly piqued and provoked and hurt. Tell F—— I've got some very comforting birch-trees, however, and cut everything away that worries *them*.—Ever your lovingest,

"APRILE."

To M. G. *and* F. G.

BRANTWOOD,
15th May, 1887.

DEAREST FRIENDS,—But however is the sight of you to come to pass then? I need the help of it more than either of you, and *have* needed it all along while *you* two were all in the Wedding March by Mendelssohn, as Coventry Patmore put it in his beautiful poem, entitled "The Angel in the House."

You both of you stole that "march" upon me; neither of you gave me the slightest warning, but came each down on me with the news that you were to be married on "Monday," and expected me to enjoy the wedding-cake.

I've never for an instant been faithless to either of you. But F—— was never more than a birch-tree to me,

and it didn't always keep march-music time; M—— was my little mother and Patroness Saint, and suddenly left me orphaned.

Heaven knows I bear no malice, but you can't hit your lovers on the heart, like that, when it suits you, and have them whenever you like to look for the bits to hang on your chatelaines again. Least of all can you expect them, when they are wellnigh on their death-beds, to hold your bells at the bridle-rein. . . .

If either of you, or both, could come here for as long as you please, it would be a beneficence to me of the very highest and gravest kind. And so farewell (and as much love as you care to take) for to-day. To-morrow (*D. V.*), I'll send you the motive of *my* "Iron March," which is in extremely steady

time, but is not in root-movement of a cheerful character. You may melt it into iron that can be wrought.—Ever your affectionate,

J. RUSKIN.

III

RUSKIN'S LETTERS TO H. G.

III

RUSKIN'S LETTERS TO H. G.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
24th January, 1885.

DEAR MISS H——,—Your letter gladdened my heart in many windows of it, east and west at once, in giving me good news of your father; in knowing that, "for M——'s sake," I was very sure to go the length of forgiving H——; and in allowing me the real grace of placing my books in your Newnham library.

I never was ambitious before in my life, though vain enough always; but I am verily ambitious now of becoming

what, though it is much to say, it does seem to me that I ought to be, an acceptedly standard girl's-author, and I had like to have added "ity"; but stopped, being very sure they will always have more rule over me than I over them!

I have ordered my publisher to send exactly the same series to you that I sent to Girton, and to continue the series that are in course of publication.

With all sorts of love to M——, and all true good wishes for your Thursday's sunrise. Ever faithfully and gratefully yours, JOHN RUSKIN.

I think you will like to see the pretty saying about Newnham, which came to me this morning from Chelsea.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
29th March, 1885.

DEAR MISS H——,—I have not promised my presentation yet; but please look over enclosed case, and tell me what you think of it.

I'm so wild just now because your father won't make *me* prime minister for a day, like the Sleeper Awakened. Love to M——. She wouldn't come to "help to look after" *me*, would she, if I took the rheumatism badly, or neuralgia, or anything pitiable (without being disagreeable?) of that sort?

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
2nd April, 1885.

DEAR MISS G——,—It's immensely nice, this unification of interests; but there's still one more case I've got to

look into. Will you please ask Miss Brown if she got my answer to her letter? and why she did not write again? It is true my reply said this presentation was promised (it is by an accident I find it still free), but I wanted an answer to some points I asked.—Ever faithfully yours, J. R.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
28th November, 1886.

MY DEAR H——,—I am especially glad of your letter to-day, for I was writing to Mrs. Alexander of a new book I'm planning from her daughter's letters, and she will be so glad to see yours.

It was only the girls at the fountain that I meant for Girton. Keep the preghiera, with the two others, at

Newnham. (What is the connection or distinction of North Hall with the rest of Newnham?)

I rejoice in knowing the Superiora drawings give pleasure. I will ask at once for the loan of them when I see my way to publishing them.

When may I send another letter to puzzle the butler?—Ever affectionately yours, J. RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
22nd February, 1887.

DEAR MISS G——,—In a gushing fit of order and remorse, proper to the spring of the year, I have come on a note of yours, dated 22d Jan., 1885, saying you would like to have my books at Newnham.

I am sure I meant to send them, but

don't remember doing anything of the sort.

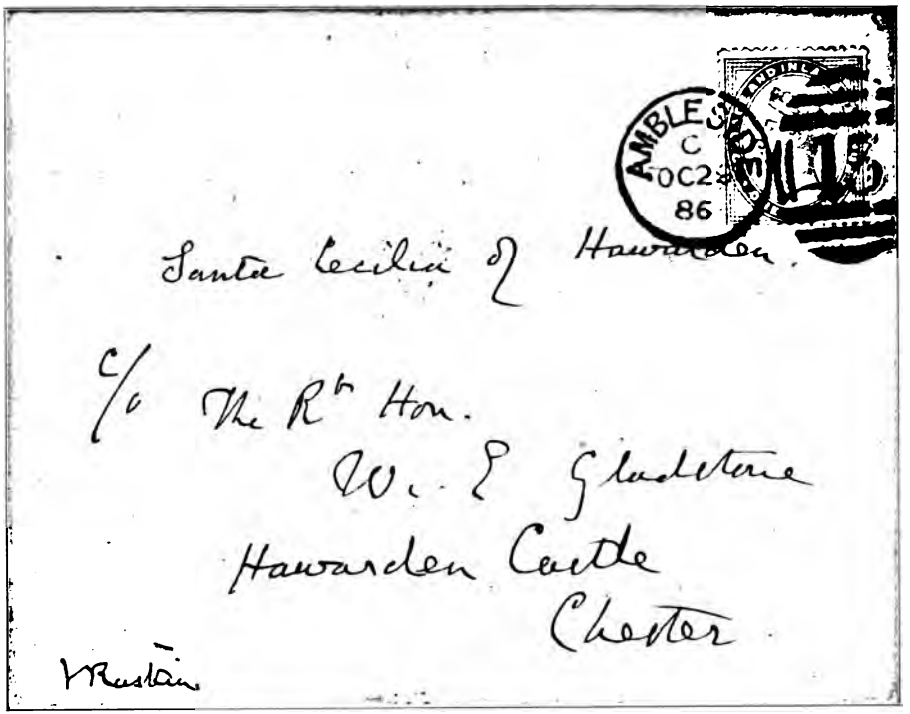
I have ordered them now—about a ton weight of them, of which I specially recommend the Political Economy.

Was it to you that I sent, last year, the story of the Superiora, and did you send me a copy of it? If you have it, and have sent me no copy, please, I want a scratch copy to print.

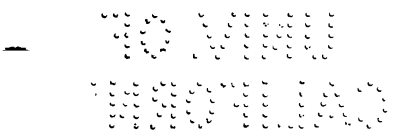
Tell me something about M——, and believe me ever, faithfully and affectionately yours, JOHN RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE,
24th February, 1887.

DEAR H——,—I am most thankful for your letter and accounts of M——. I have not countermanded my order. I think my books may really be of



THE LETTER THAT PUZZLED THE BUTLER



some use to people now — in kind hands.

I am sending drawings to Girton, on loan from St. George's Guild, in the hope they may copy them well enough to be of use to themselves. I am going to look you out one or two, also, which you can keep as long as you like to look at, and copy, if anybody can.

What elementary practice in drawing is there?

I shall not need the Superiora drawings, only copy of the text, at leisure. When done please let it be sent to Mr. Jowett, Printing Works, Aylesbury.— Ever affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN.

IV

RUSKIN AND GLADSTONE

(Paper by Canon Scott Holland)

IV

RUSKIN AND GLADSTONE

July, 1898.—We felt at Westminster Abbey that we were burying the last of the prophets who can come to us from an earlier and greater generation than our own. But let us not forget that there is still one left, though buried in silence up by Coniston Lake; and the long silence is all the more pathetic as we recall the exquisite speech which was the characteristic of John Ruskin. There he waits for the end which is so long in coming, and for us he is already passed away. Perhaps it may be well

for me to recall the first occasion on which Mr. Gladstone and John Ruskin met. It was, curiously, far on in both lives; but somewhere about the year 1881. Mr. Ruskin had written an article, in the *Nineteenth Century*, which had profoundly stirred Mr. Gladstone, and it was suggested that it would be a happy opportunity for Mr. Ruskin to be invited to Hawarden. He accepted, and I found myself at Broughton Station, arriving with him by the same train. As we drove up I discovered he had the darkest view possible of his host, imbibed from the "Master" Carlyle, to whose imagination he figured apparently as the symbol of all with which he was at war. Ruskin was therefore extremely timid and suspicious, and had secured, in view of a

possible retreat, a telegram which might at any moment summon him home; this telegram loomed largely the first day, and we were constantly under its menace. But as hour by hour he got happier, the references to its possible arrival came more and more rarely, and finally it became purely mythical.

The amusement of the meeting of the two lay in the absolute contrast between them at every point on which conversation could conceivably turn. The brimming optimism of Mr. Gladstone, hoping all things, believing everybody, came clashing up at every turn with the inveterate pessimism of Mr. Ruskin, who saw nothing on every side but a world rushing headlong down into the pit.

They might talk on the safest of

topics, and still the contrast was inevitable. We heard Gladstone get on Homer and Iliad, and a sense that there, at least, all would be well, came over us; what was our despair when we realised that in the poetic record of some prehistoric exchange Mr. Gladstone was showing how thoroughly Homer had entered into those principles of barter which modern economic science would justify. As he paused in an eloquent exposition for a response from his listener, Mr. Ruskin said, in a tone of bitter regret: "And to think that the devil of Political Economy was alive even then." At another time, Walter Scott was uppermost. Here, indeed, we thought was common ground; but Mr. Gladstone unfortunately dropped the remark that

"Sir Walter had made Scotland," and on Mr. Ruskin's inquiry as to the meaning of the phrase, imagine our anxiety when Mr. Gladstone began telling us of the amazing contrast between the means of communication in Scotland before Sir Walter wrote, compared with the present day. He poured out stores of most interesting characteristic memories of his own days when one coach a week ran between this town and that, and of the strange isolation of the human life hidden away in the Highlands, and with this he triumphantly compared the number of coaches and char-à-bancs, &c., that were conveying masses of happy trippers up and down the Trossachs. Mr. Ruskin's face had been deepening in horror, and at last he could bear it no longer: "But, my

dear sir," he broke out, "that is not making Scotland; that is unmaking it."

These ruptures of interest were bound to occur. The one trusted in the democratic movement, however chaotic and vulgar might be some of its manifestations; the other had learnt from his master, and faithfully repeated his lesson, that the only hope for the great mass of mankind lay in obedience to the strong will of the strong man who would know so much better for them than they would themselves, what it was their true life needed.

But the beautiful thing of it all was, that in spite of every collision, they learnt to like and love each other better and better.

Mr. Gladstone retained throughout the tone of courteous and deferential

reverence, as for a man whom he profoundly honoured. And Mr. Ruskin threw off every touch of suspicion with which he had arrived, and showed, with all the frankness and charm of a child, his new sense of the greatness and nobility of the character of his host. He made himself absolutely at home, showed himself obviously happy, talked in his most delicious freedom; and finally, on departing, as he stood at the hall steps, begged publicly to recant all that he had ever said or thought against Mr. Gladstone, and pledged himself to withdraw from print some unhappy phrase which he had used about him, and which it now stung him with shame to remember. It was a complete victory, and all the more noticeable just because the two talked a different language, and

moved in different worlds. I drove away with Mr. Ruskin again to the station, after a three days' visit, and he poured out freely to me the joy of his discovery, but was a little nervous as to how he was going to explain it to "the Master" when he got back to Chelsea. I met him again at breakfast in Downing Street, when he was in radiant force, and I shall never forget Mr. Gladstone's look of puzzled earnestness as Mr. Ruskin expounded at length a scheme he had for enforcing our social responsibility for crime. We, all of us, were guilty of the crimes done in our neighbourhood. Why had we not sustained a higher moral tone, which would make men ashamed to commit crime when we are near? Why had we allowed the conditions which lead

to crime? We ought to feel every crime as our own. How good then would it be if London were cut up into districts, and when a murder was committed in any one district, the inhabitants should draw lots to decide who should be hung for it. Would not that quicken the public conscience? How excellent the moral effect would be if the man on whom the lot fell were of a peculiarly high character!

Mr. Ruskin felt sure there would be no more murders in that district for some time. He conceived that even the murderer himself would be profoundly moved as he silently witnessed the execution of this innocent and excellent gentleman; and would make a resolution as he walked away that he would abstain from such deeds in

future. What was Mr. Gladstone to say to this? Was he to confute it, or show the difficulties of its practical working? Or again, there was a newspaper which Mr. Ruskin had devised, in which the news, all of it, was to be absolutely true. The difficulty was that it would have long ceased to be news before it could be certified to be true; everything in the paper would be months after the event, and everybody would probably have long forgotten what it was talking about. But still, when it did come, months late, there would be the comfort of knowing that it was at least true. And instead of police news there would be sketches of all the people best worth knowing in the neighbourhood, with notes of their moral characteristics. Speaking of Elizabeth Fry's pris-

on reforms, he said it was silly to fuss about the insides of prisons. Once you had sent people into prison, make the inside as bad as possible. It was outside you wanted reform. It was Society that made crime possible. That the idle rich were the real criminals, that every man who had over £5000 a year should be imprisoned if he did no work. On every subject that turned up that morning the side M. took was the unexpected, and both war and slavery found in him a warm advocate. Ruskin had more than any man the platonic charm which mingles humour and seriousness so that the two are inseparable. And this was the form of humour that was least congenial to Mr. Gladstone. Not at all, as is so often said, that he did not enjoy humour; few

people enjoyed more heartily a good piece of fun, or laughed with a larger freedom. But when Mr. Gladstone was serious he was serious; while Mr. Ruskin, like Plato, had ever a quiver of irony and wit stirring within everything that was most serious, so that it was impossible to separate the two. This caused the bewilderment.

So the two prophets met, and were knit together by an affectionate reverence for one another which never failed. Each was to go his own way and do his separate work, and it was impossible that they should co-operate together. But for all that, they learnt to know that they were fighting on the same side in the great warfare between good and ill; that they had the same cause at heart; that they both trusted

in the supremacy of conscience over all material things, and in the reality of righteousness, and in the hatefulness of lust and cruelty and wrong. Their spirits drew together though their ways lay so far apart; and this because, for both, life had its deep root in piety, and had its one and only consummation in God.

V

THE DEAD RUSKIN

(Paper by Canon Scott Holland)

V

THE DEAD RUSKIN

RUSKIN is dead. The first instinct is to repeat the words over and over again, even as Charles Lamb went about saying nothing all day but "Coleridge is dead! Coleridge is dead!" Death is such a strange context for these radiant souls, who flash, and kindle, and inspire. They seem to be part of our life-tissue, to have passed into our blood. We cannot strip ourselves of their presence. We cannot force ourselves to feel that this earth of ours holds them no longer. They belong to our vital force.

How can we believe that they are dead? And, then, there comes the personal memory of the man, with all the notable characteristics that made his presence among us memorable. Who that had ever seen him could forget John Ruskin? He had the touch that goes straight to the heart. He came up to one so confidentially, so appealingly, with the wistful look in his grey-glinting eyes, which seemed to say, "I never find anybody who quite understands me, but I still hope and think that you will." How quaint, the mingling of this wistfulness in the face with the spotted blue stock and the collars and the frock-coat, which made him look like something between an old-fashioned nobleman of the Forties, and an angel that had lost its way. The small,

bird-like head and hands and figure had, nevertheless, a curious and old-world pomp in their gait and motions. The bushy eyebrows gave a strength to the upper part of the face which was a little unexpected, and which found its proper balance in the white beard of his last years. He, somehow, moved one as with the delicate tenderness of a woman; and he felt frail, as if the roughness of the world would hurt and break him; and one longed to shelter him from all that was ugly and cruel.

I was much struck once by the effect of music upon him. He knew, as Plato did, its educational value. But, as an art, he was not inside it. It moved him from without. One day, at Hawarden, he had tired himself in a long delightful talk to us over St. Ur-

sula and his beloved Carpaccio; and, after tea, as dusk came on, he lay back in a big chair to rest, while M. G. played on to us in the dark, with a magical touch peculiar to herself. We thought that he would sleep, but he grew absorbed, and, at last, rose from his chair and walked over to the piano, and hung over it until she had finished. As she ended, we all waited for him to speak, but he was so moved that he could find no words, and could only say, "Thank you! thank you!" It was in such sharp contrast to the wonderful speech that he would pour out on a matter of Art whenever he was moved, that one understood how this world of sound had never passed into his speech. It had deep effect, but the effect was dumb. Afterwards, as the trouble grew

in his brain, he felt for relief more especially in music. He would send for M. G. to play for him in bad hours, and he would have the Cathedral at Christ Church closed at times for him to roam up and down it and listen to the organ. It may be that the unknown Art had more soothing power over him than that which he had himself mastered.

His social message grew directly out of his Art teaching, under the stormy influence of Carlyle. Good Art could only spring out of right living, so he knew, and Carlyle showed him that there could be no right living under the utilitarian individualism of industrial competition.

The remedy for the bad Art of the day must begin in the healing of the national life. "Have you seen Keble

Chapel, Mr. Ruskin?" we innocently asked him. "No!" "Are you going to see it?" "No! If it is new, it is hideous. Or if it is beautiful, it ought not to be. We don't deserve it. You clergy ought not to have any beautiful churches. You ought to be out in the wilderness with St. John the Baptist. When you have converted England, it will be time to think whether we may have any beautiful things again." That was his verdict. It was no day for Art, while our filthy cities cried to Heaven against us. So he preached with ever intenser vehemence and skill, giving precision and reality and exquisite utterance to that which had been, in Carlyle, but as a thunderous roar. To this teaching, he gave close study and thought; and ever he perfected, for its

expression, his amazing skill over language. His style freed itself from the overloaded consciousness of its earlier forms; and, without losing any of its beauty, became more concise, well-grit, muscular. It was delightful to hear him, in his Oxford days, roll out his magnificent periods from "Modern Painters," and then explain to us their defects and their mannerisms, while still on the defensive against undue depreciation of them. "I wrote that sentence over five times before I was satisfied," he exclaimed; "and then, the young ladies call it 'gush'!" We cannot better recall him, than by rehearsing a great passage from his writings, taken from the Lectures called "A Joy for ever," given in Manchester in 1857.

It marks the moment when his interest in Art was just passing into his interest in political economy. He has come down to talk on pictures and a picture-gallery; and, to the surprise of his hearers, he is found to be dealing with the well-worn economic fallacy that luxury gives beneficial employment to the poor. The fallacy was never more forcibly exposed; and as it still haunts the thievish corners of our streets to-day, we may well suffer the great preacher to speak to us once again from his grave, in his own incomparable utterance:—

"Granted, that whenever we spend money for whatever purpose, we set people to work; and passing by, for the moment, the question whether the work we set them to is all equally healthy

and good for them, we will assume that whenever we spend a guinea we provide an equal number of people with healthy maintenance for a given time. But, by the way in which we spend it, we entirely direct the labour of those people during that given time. We become their masters or mistresses, and we compel them to produce, within a certain period, a certain article. Now, that article may be a useful and lasting one, or it may be a useless and perishable one—it may be one useful to the whole community, or useful only to ourselves. And our selfishness and folly, or our virtue and prudence, are shown, not by our spending money, but by our spending it for the wrong or the right thing; and we are wise and kind, not in maintaining a certain

number of people for a given period, but only in requiring them to produce, during that period, the kind of things which shall be useful to society, instead of those which are only useful to ourselves.

"Thus, for instance, if you are a young lady, and employ a certain number of sempstresses for a given time, in making a given number of simple and serviceable dresses—suppose seven—of which you can wear one yourself for half the winter, and give six away to poor girls who have none, you are spending your money unselfishly. But if you employ the same number of sempstresses for the same number of days in making four, or five, or six beautiful flounces for your own ball-dress — flounces which will clothe no

one but yourself, and which you will yourself be unable to wear at more than one ball—you are employing your money selfishly. You have maintained, indeed, in each case the same number of people, but in one case you have directed their labour to the service of the community; in the other case you have consumed it wholly upon yourself. I don't say you are never to do so; I don't say you ought not sometimes to think of yourselves only, and to make yourselves as pretty as you can, only do not confuse coquettishness with benevolence, nor cheat yourselves into thinking that all the finery you can wear is so much put into the hungry mouths of those beneath you: it is not so; it is what you yourselves, whether you will or no, must sometimes instinc-

tively feel it to be—it is what those who stand shivering in the streets, forming a line to watch you as you step out of your carriages, *know* it to be; those fine dresses do not mean that so much has been put into their mouths, but that so much has been taken out of their mouths. The real politico-economical signification of every one of those beautiful toilettes is just this—that you have had a certain number of people put for a certain number of days wholly under your authority by the sternest of slave-masters —hunger and cold; and you have said to them, 'I will feed you, indeed, and clothe you, and give you fuel for so many days; but during those days you shall work for me only; your little brothers need clothes, but you shall

make none for them; your sick friend needs clothes, but you shall make none for her; you yourself will soon need another and a warmer dress, but you shall make none for yourself. You shall make nothing but lace and roses for me; for this fortnight to come you shall work at the patterns and petals, and then I will crush and consume them away in an hour.'

"And it would be strange if at any great assembly which, while it dazzled the young and the thoughtless, beguiled the gentler hearts that beat beneath the embroidery, with a placid sensation of luxurious benevolence—as if by all that they wore in waywardness of beauty, comfort had been first given to the distressed, and aid to the

indigent; it would be strange, I say, if for a moment the spirits of Truth and of Terror, which walk invisibly among the masques of the earth, would lift the dimness from our erring thoughts, and show us how—inasmuch as the sums exhausted for that magnificence would have given back the failing breath to many an unsheltered outcast on moor and street — they who wear it have literally entered into partnership with Death, and dressed themselves in his spoils. Yes, if the veil could be lifted not only from your thoughts, but from your human sight, you would see—the angels do see — on those gay white dresses of yours, strange dark spots, and crimson patterns that you knew not of—spots of the inextinguishable red that all the seas cannot wash away;

yes, and among the pleasant flowers that crown your fair heads, and glow on your wreathed hair, you would see that one weed was always twisted which no one thought of — the grass that grows on graves."

THE END

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